

Remarks

Reconsideration of the instant application is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 2-6, 10-25, 27-33, and 35-37 are now pending. Claims 26 and 34 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. Claims 30-33 and 35-37 have been allowed. Claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of claims 1 and 7 from which it previously depended to place such claim into allowable format. Certain of claims 2-6, 11-25, and 27-29 have been amended as indicated above such that claims 2-6, 11-25, and 27-29 now all depend, directly or indirectly, from allowable claim 10. Applicants hereby reserve the right to pursue any and all subject matter canceled or withdrawn from the instant claims in one or more divisional or other copending applications.

II. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER (CLAIMS 10 AND CLAIMS 2-6, 11-25, 27-29)

The Examiner confirmed in the Office Action that claim 10 as pending was objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent format including all the limitations of the claims from which it depended. Applicants have hereinabove amended claim 10 as suggested by the Examiner, incorporating the limitations of original claims 1 and 7 therein. Accordingly, such claim is in condition for allowance.

Applicants further note that pending claims 2-6, 11-25, and 27-29 all now depend, indirectly or directly, from allowable claim 10. Therefore, such claims are themselves in condition for allowance.

III. THE EXAMINER'S REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. SECTIONS 102 AND 103 ARE RENDERED MOOT

The Examiner rejected claims 1-9, 11-25, and 27-29 under 35 U.S.C. sections 102 and 103 as being anticipated or unpatentable in light of combinations of one or more cited documents.

While applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's assertions regarding the cited art of the Office Action and the patentability status of the canceled subject matter,

applicants nevertheless respectfully submit that in light of the above amendments, all pending claims are now allowed or necessarily allowable as described above. Therefore, the Examiner's rejections are rendered moot.

IV. ALLOWED CLAIMS

Claims 30-33 and 35-37 remain allowed.

V. DOUBLE PATENTING

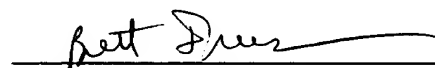
The Examiner provisionally rejected claims 1-9, 11-25, and 29 under the double patenting doctrine as being unpatentable over claim 20 of copending application no. 09/954,335.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's rejection. Nevertheless, applicants respectfully submit that all other substantive rejections have been overcome, thus the Examiner's provisional rejection should be withdrawn and the claims allowed. (MPEP 804.I.B).

VI. CONCLUSION

Reconsideration is respectfully requested. In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is urged that the present application be allowed. An early and favorable response is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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